

THE TOMBS FAMILY OF WHEATLEY
(Information from 'Granny Tombs' on June 14th 2006)

Much has already been written about Alderman Tombs who is remembered for his tireless work for the improvement of conditions in Wheatley for nearly fifty years. We know less about his daughter, Dorothy Tombs, his son William Thomas Tombs, and his grandson, William Henry Tombs.

William Thomas Tombs was born in Wheatley on 8th February 1910. He married Emily Hilda Bricknell (b. 4 February 1915) at Horspath Church on November 27th 1937. The marriage was conducted by Canon Butterworth, who died of a heart attack, the following Saturday, whilst watching a Rugby match in London.

William Thomas Tombs ran a successful coal business beside the Railway Station in Wheatley. In his spare time he was a keen cricketer. He died on December 2nd 1956 aged 46 and he was buried in Wheatley Churchyard.

William and Emily had a son, William Henry (b.26th August 1939). He was an active member of St Mary's Church where he was both a chorister and a server. He married Dorothy Braithewaite in St Mary's Church, in 1962, and they went to live in the newly built Orchard House in Church Road, next to his Aunt Dorothy. They had three children: William David Tombs (b.1963); Glen Raymond Tombs (b.1964); and Susan Elizabeth Tombs (b.27/12/1973). William Henry was a leader of the St John's Ambulance group in Wheatley. He was in the St John's Ambulance group on duty at Bladon on the day of Sir Winston Churchill's funeral, and later he was presented to the Queen in London. After he and his family moved to Beaconsfield, William Henry continued to come back to Wheatley each week, for several months, to run the group until a replacement could be found. He was also a supporter of Speedway in Cowley, where he went every Thursday evening, whilst Granny Tombs did the babysitting! Later he trained as Municipal Garden and Parks Manager and worked in London.

Christine Jackson, nee Tombs, a cousin, has written a wonderfully lively account of her life as a child in Wheatley in 1940s and 1950s (*On Parallel lines: a diary of a Wheatley Family*). Her father, Bill, whose mother, Keziah, ran a busy general store, was a sister-in-law-of William Thomas.

William Henry Tombs died in 2000, shortly before his 61st birthday. His ashes were interred in Rochester Cathedral. His widow, Dorothy, now lives in Yorkshire.

- William David married Caroline and they now live in Norwich.
- Glen Raymond and his wife now live in Scotland.

Susan Elizabeth, a school-teacher, married Ian Campbell and they live in Scotland.